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COTTON

PICKIN

TIME



AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HENRY A. MOOS

COTTON PICKIN TIME

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BY HENRY ANTONIO MOOS



SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS:
HENRY A. MOOS, PUBLISHER.
1904.

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1904

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PRINTED BY

NIC TENGGA, S. A.

PRESS OF NIC TENGGA, S. A.

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COTTON PICKIN TIME

AND OTHER POEMS.

COTTON PICKIN TIME.

Wen de mustang grapes hez ripened, en de punkins is
immense,

En de juicy watahmillion 'gins ter look "lack thirty cents;"
Wen de fiel's is wite wid cotton, en dey 'gins ter shuck de
cohn,

En de summer, hit's jess leabin, en de autumn's comin on;
Wen de nights is gittin coolish, en de days is jess sur—*plime*,
Den us niggers hass ter hussle, fer it's cotton pickin time.

Hass ter gib up "craps" en "shin-digs"—has ter say: "Ole
town, good-bye!"

Hass ter hunt up dem dat owes us—*hass ter leab 'em. wid er
sigh!*

Has ter pay our debts—er promise dat we'll pay when we
comes back.

Den we gits into de waggin, wid our cloes done in er sack,
En we hikes out to de contry, ware wile mawnin glories
climb,

En we gits dere all a-singin—in de cotton pickin time.

En den yeahly in mawnin, wen de dew is on de grass,
We gits up en eats our breakfus, en den to de fiel's we pass.
Dere I meets ma gal, Malindy, er ma Susy Ann, er Mame,
En wile we is pickin cotton, we is coatin jess de same.
Den some coon strikes up er "rag-time," en de udders in hit
chime;

En we busts de air wide open—wen it's cotton pickin time.

En at night de wile kiyotes seyenades us wid deir howls,
En sets all de dawgs a-barkin. En de hootin ob de owls
Makes de skeery women shibber. Den some nights we calls
de dawgs,

En we hunts de coons en possums in de trees er holler lawgs.
En we *gits 'em, too*, ma honey, eben wen we hass ter climb!
En dey's cooked nex day fer dinner—in de cotton pickin
time.

Wen de days gits short en cooler, we goes out into de wood,
Ware we skeers up squir'ls en rabbits, dat is lookin roun fer
food.

Er prehaps we goes a-fishin, er we gethers up pecahns,
Wich we eats aroun de chimbley, wile we tells each udder
yahns.

Er some nights we makes 'cahn candy, en swaps lies tell hit's
er crime;

Er we laughs en does de cake-walk—wen it's cotton pickin
time.

Wen de cotton pickin's ober, we goes back ter town ter spen'
All de money made wid pickin. Wen we runs ergin er frien',

We pertens ter walk lop-sided, all fum ca'yin so much dough,
En we brags tell he feels sorry he stayed home, en didn't go.
Dese yere trips into de contry leabs us niggers feelin prime,
En we allus likes de comin ob de cotton pickin time.

WHERE THERE'S LIFE, THERE'S LOVE.

God is Love—and Love is everywhere.
It penetrates the earth, and hovers in the air.
It's influence holds the planets within the sun's embrace,
While stars sing to each other in love-tones throughout space.

The wind in loving dalliance strokes all it passes o'er,
And ocean waves with kisses bestrew the neighboring shore.
Love trembles in the murmur of every little stream,
Which but reflects the love-light in every passing gleam.

'Tis Love that gives the flower its wondrous, brilliant hue,
And makes it smile with raptures that thrill it through and
 through.
It glistens in the dewdrop on which the sunlight falls;
The bird's song is its music, as to its mate its calls.

'Tis felt in sweet emotion by every living thing,
And takes from seeming evil its bitter, deadly sting.
It permeates all nature—around—below—above.—
All, all feel its sweet power, for where there's life, there's
 love!

“FATHER.”

TO O. M. FARNSWORTH.

In all the sweet songs with which children are hushed,
And in all the poems that ever were gushed,
Do they ever mention that great—ahem—well,
You rarely, at best, can find where they tell
Of a father.

When waiting so anxiously for doubtful news,
That e'en your beloved cigar you refuse,
Is there aught on this earth that will tickle you so,
As when the proud nurse says: “It's twins,” and you know
You're a father.

No matter how stocks or the weather may go;
How often at night he may get up to—oh
Well, no one's so happy and easy to please
As the “goo-gooing” man with the babe on his knees.
He's a father.

'Tis grand to be rich—to be president, but
There's nothing that gives such a proud, manly strut,
As, when passing a group of small children at play,
You hear a shrill, little treble voice say:
“Dat's my fawver!”

THE HAND OF A FRIEND.

How rarely you see it, and yet, oh how welcome!
The greatest of blessings that Heaven can send.
In sorrow or sickness; reverses of fortune;
How pleasant the touch of the hand of a friend!

When Death lays his cold, clammy hand on a loved one,
And anguish and grief at your aching heart rend,
How comforting is the beloved, sympathetic—
The soft, tender clasp of the hand of a friend!

When worn out with business; your health badly shattered;
Your fortune ail gone—not a dollar to lend;
How your heart leaps with joy, when you see it extended
In succor—the warm, generous hand of a friend!

When laid low by fever, your form weak and 'wasted,
And horrible dreams (that you fear must portend
Most dire misfortunes) accompany your slumbers,
How cool and refreshing the hand of a friend!

At last, when you've fulfilled your short earthly mission,
And feel that your life is now nearing its end,
What soothes your last moments, and gives hope and comfort,
And closes your eyes, but the hand of a friend?

When your soul makes its flight to that Dwelling supernal,
And to the bright throne its happy way wends,
You'll find them—they form the chief feature of Heaven—
With love they're extended—the hands of your friends!

TRANSFORMATION.

'Twas Autumn, and, in pensive mood,
 I slowly wandered through a wood.
 Dark was the sky; the dripping trees
 Were shivering in the cold, damp breeze,
 And sighed as if by fear possessed,
 Or by despondent thoughts oppressed.

As in my face the light mist blew,
 And drenched my garments through and through,
 It seemed to penetrate my heart,
 And chill it through in every part;
 For hope and peace therefrom had fled,
 Driv'n out by dark despair and dread.

The fires of Hell burned in my brain;
 My soul and body writhed with pain;
 Plunged in deep gloom, my wavering mind
 Still groped for what it could not find.
 "Help me, oh God—if God there be!"
 I wailed in utter misery.

* * * * *

A sudden flood of light—the gloom
 Had fled as from a lighted room;
 My soul, illumed by peace, was bright,
 As though it shone with golden light,
 And my whole being thrilled and glowed
 With joys untold, that through it flowed.

I looked around—the setting sun
Lit up the tree-tops, one by one,
Until they glistened in his light;
And sparkling drops, like diamonds bright,
Reflected in each tiny blaze
The dazzling glitter of his rays.

A rainbow in the eastern sky,
Bright-hued, gave promise from on high
Of blessings great in store for me;
The song of birds, so blithe and free;
The flowers so beautiful—the whole
Was glad and glorious, as my soul!

TO MY QUEEN.

ON HER TWENTY-NINTH BIRTHDAY.

My queen is twenty-nine to-day,
And I to her must homage pay.
With joy I haste to do the task,
For 'tis the very boon I'd ask.

I owe her fealty, for she
Has ever been most kind to me.
And, though my faults have many been,
She's quick to pardon me, my queen!

I give her gems so very rare
That none on earth with them compare;
For they're the treasures of my heart,
Which plentifully I impart.

And with these jewels I, to-day,
From head to foot will her array;
And, humbly kneeling at her feet,
New vows of loyalty repeat.

My queen is twenty-nine today!
Health and long life for her I pray!
Though as my queen I her adore,
I am her king—I ask no more!

THE WIDOW.

Beneath the bright electric light
The widow sits and deeply ponders.
She thinks of all her past, so bright,
And then about the future wonders.

How happy her first married life;
Her husband fond, and so devoted.
And she was such a loving wife—
How they upon each other doted!

And now her lot is very sad,
Though richest silks and gems adorn her.
If she should die, who would feel bad?
Would any of her cronies mourn her?

'Tis true, the meddling gossips charge
She's fond of dress and fast society;
But then her alimony's large,
For she is of the *grass* variety.

THE WONDROUS RIVER.

A LEGEND OF THE GUADALUPE.

See yon river flowing southward!
Free and strong and deep its current.
Flashing so brightly in the sunlight;
Dashing o'er boulders, in its hurry—
Rushing between the highest and largest;
Pushing with mighty force its way onward;
Tumbling in cascades down mighty embankments;
Stumbling, anon, where it rushes too swiftly;
Leaping yonder, o'er that tree-trunk;
Creeping here, it seems, so slowly;
Whirling madly to the right;
Twirling 'round and 'round to left;
Dancing so prettily, there, with the sunbeams
Glancing so radiantly from its bright bosom;
There, dark blue, beneath deep shadows,
Where no sunshine ever lights it,
Dull and sluggish is its pace, as if the dark
Lulled it slowly, with its magic calm, to rest.
Now again 'tis in the welcome sunlight!
How it bounds with joy—this changeful river!

* * * * *

This wondrous river (so the legend says)
Seems to possess a magic influence,
When lighted by the sun's resplendent rays;
For all who look upon it, then, go thence

Enraptured by its beauties. Those who kneel
And drink its limpid water from the hand,
Are bound to it as by a spell. They feel,
At first, no sign of this enchantment, and
May wander off to countries far away—
And years may come and go—but, ere they die,
Some secret longing siezes them, and they
Feel that they must return—they know not why—
And drink again this water as of yore.
So all give way to this strong impulse, and
Return and drink, just as they did before—
And then—they fall beneath Death's blighting hand!

* * * * *

In that eventful year, when brave men fought and died
That Texas might be free, there dwelt, upon the banks
Of this delightful stream, in lowly huts of logs,
Some families of poor and simple Mexicans.
And there were two among them, who were bound by ties
Of strong, enduring love—a love that lasts till death.
Jovita was the name the fair young maiden bore;
Francisco was her lover. Hand in hand, they sat,
Day after day, upon some log beside the stream,
And thought of love; or they would wander, side by side,
Beneath the forest trees, and gather nuts; or pick
Delicious berries from the vines that grew around.
And thus the time passed by, and now the day drew near,
On which their hands would be united, like their hearts,
When word was brought that war had broken out, and soon
The noise of cannon would be heard o'er all that land.
Francisco, fired with patriotic zeal and love
Of liberty, resolved to go and fight for home
And freedom, though he must postpone his wedding day

Until he should return. So with a heavy heart
He bade his dear Jovita lovingly farewell.
They wandered long, that day, along the river's bank,
And many were the tears they shed, and vows exchanged.
Remembering, then, the rumored virtues of the stream,
Francisco said: "Jovita, dearest, let us kneel and drink
This water, and both swear that, though long years may pass,
We will return and meet each other at this place,
And drink again this water—just as we do now—
Then we will plight our troth, and ever after live
United." So they drank, and pledged each other as
Francisco wished. He left her then, and rode away
To fight for liberty. And valliantly he fought!
A year passed by; Francisco came (as he had vowed)
To meet his dear Jovita on the river's bank.
But when he reached his home—ah, what a change he found!
Hit little hut in ruins, and his parents gone;
No children ran to meet him, with their happy shouts;
The neighboring cabins gone—Jovita, where was she?
Not at the usual trysting places—there he searched
In vain. At last, in deep despair, he sought the spot
Where they had parted just a year before. "She said
That she would meet me here, and would she break her
word?"
He murmured as he knelt upon the bank and stooped
To dip his hand beneath the water. Then he called
In loving tones: "Jovita, darling, come and kneel
Beside me, as you vowed to do, and drink with me;
Then we will pledge our love, and, with our hearts and hands
United, feel eternal happiness!" He turned,
And there, beside him, knelt Jovita, wondrous fair!
Her form seemed light as air; her robe was white; her face
More beautiful than that of any earthly being.

She smiled upon him—oh, how sweet that heavenly smile!
 What endless, powerful love there was conveyed in it!—
 And stooped and dipped with him, and drank the crystal fluid.
 Then reaching forth her shadowy hand, it clasped his own,
 And drew him nearer, to a phantom breast; two arms,
 That seemed to have no weight—and yet he felt them—
 pressed

Around his neck with fond embrace, and her light form
 Fell backward with him, in the water. “Dearest, we
 Will never more be parted now!” He cried with joy.—
 The water closed above him—he was gone—with her!

* * * * *

But the river flows on ever, never ceasing or decreasing
 In its roaring, pouring, rumbling, tumbling, stumbling,
 Whirling, twirling, rushing, pushing, dashing, splashing.
 And the dancing sunbeams, glancing from its bosom as of
 yore,

Sparkle, as it flows on—evermore!

A TEXAS SUNSET.

The flowers are folding their petals;
 The bushes still shake from the wind,
 That, after a gale, quickly settles,
 Till only a zephyr refined
 Still lingers—then suddenly ceases.
 The songs of the birds, too, are hushed;
 The sky's sheeny azure increases;
 The hills in the West become flushed.

O'erhead, droves of clouds, small and creamy,
Like flocks of sheep, stretch to the West.
The air is so perfumed and dreamy,
'Twould lull the most sleepless to rest.
The rays of the sun, variegated,
Now touch up the clouds and the sky
In shades so superbly created,
They'd the brush of an artist defy.

Clouds, tinged with the brightest carnation,
That blends into purple and blue,
Touch others of lighter creation,
Of roseate and amethyst hue.
A sprinkling of crimson quite vivid;
A dash, here and there, of dark brown.
Gold fringes the edges of livid
Strange *cumuli*, there, farther down.

The sun, like a round, fiery boulder,
Rests on the silhouette of the hills,
Then, as he descends, somewhat colder
The air quickly grows, till it chills.
The bright hues grow gradually fainter;
The stars light up, one at a time.
The sun—the great heavenly painter—
Has covered his picture sublime!

THE FIGHT.

A bar—a "gang"—a "jolly time."
The glasses clink—the "goods" are "prime."
A joke—a laugh—the "lie" is passed.
A blow—a fight!—two men clinch fast.

They twist and writhe in deadly clasp;
 Breathe hard, then break each other's grasp;
 A knife—a shot—and on the floor
 Two bodies fall—the fight is o'er.

Two coffins to their graves are borne;
 Two broken-hearted women mourn;
 The dismal tolling of a bell—
 "*Honor's appeased*"—two souls— ——!

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.

'Tis said that ere our lovely earth was made,
 And ere the planets in the heavens played—
 Aye, ere the Universe itself appeared
 Out of the depths of Chaos, dark and wierd,
 Sweet Love was born.

For Love was present when the powerful Word
 Brought all things forth; and, though unseen—un-
 heard,
 His influence was felt within the soul
 Of each; and, as the marks of Time unroll,
 It still remains.

For Love is planted, as a seed, within
 The soul of every living thing, and in
 Some grows, luxuriant, like a lovely tree.
 But in the soul of man alone can he
 Bear sweetest fruit.

THE SAGA OF THE JOKULS.*

A Tale of the Discovery of Iceland, as Related in Song, About
the End of the Tenth Century, by Halfried the Scald.

THE RETURN OF NADDOD.

When Naddod, the viking, returned from a voyage
To Faroer, he brought back most wonderful tidings,
Of how his strong vessel was driven by tempests
Far out of her course, many miles to the northward,
Until she was carried in sight of an island
All covered with jokuls and frozen all over.
The weather he found there so cold he departed,
And sailed back to Norway, and there he related
All that had befallen him—all his adventures;
And many who heard him believed what he told them.

FLOKI'S RESOLVE.

Among the men who heard with great delight
The stories told by Naddod, there was one
Whose name was Floki, who had e'er been wont
To go on viking raids, though young in years.
Now, when he heard the tales that Naddod told,
He longed to see this island of the North,
Where e'en in summer snow was known to fall,
And where the mountain tops were clothed with snow
And ice throughout the year; so he at last
Resolved to go, though he should risk his life.

* Snow-Capped Mountains.

FOLKI GETS READY TO SAIL.

No power on earth could stay him, now he was determined,
So with this firm resolve he went on board his vessel,
Where he commanded that his men around him gather,
There quickly told he them of what he had determined.
They all possessed—like him—the spirit of adventure,
(Aye, there were some to whom his words were very welcome)

So all agreed to go with him to see this island,
No matter if the voyage should prove most disastrous.
Then early in the morn—the weather being pleasant—
When yet the whole world slept, they left the shores of Norway.

FLOKI SAILS—MORNING.

The sea was blue as a fair maiden's eye—
Far bluer, indeed, than the bright, cloudless sky;
The breeze was as fresh as the breath from the lips
Of love, which in youth one so eargerly sips;
The air was as cool and as soft as the kiss
Which only a mother knows how to bestow;
The ship bounded forward, as swift as the doe
When chased by the hounds; and the gay billows rolled
And danced with delight. And thus all nature told
That never was there a morn fairer than this.

THE CALM—NOON.

By noon there came a calm; the sea
Turned smooth as glass—still as the dead.
The ship moved not, and not a breeze

Stirred the flat sails, which hung so limp,
And longed for one caressing touch,
Which came not. E'en the copper sun
Seemed to stand still within a sky
Of lead. One scarcely could draw breath.
The air was hot and sultry, and
It seemed that nature now was dead.

THEY TAKE TO THE OARS.

Floki, the viking,	Off we go merrily!
Liked not the weather,	Naught can appall us!
That seemed foreboding	We are the fearless,
Ill to his party,	Daring sea rovers!"
But with great courage,	Said the bold Floki.
Like a true Norseman—	And the men bravely
Never despairing—	Bent to the long oars.
Spake to his followers	As the broad oar blades
Words bright and cheering.	Flashed in the sunlight
Then he commanded	Forward and backward;
That his brave vikings	Sent the spray flying;
Man all the rowers'-seats	Raised sparkling ripples;
And work the long oars.	Swiftly the dragon
"Let us away, then!	Sped through the water.
Pull with a will, men!	

THE STORM.

Some hours after noon had passed, they spied a small black
cloud
Far to the West, which soon spread out, till, like a mighty
shroud,
It covered sky and sun until it hid them both from sight.

And turned the glaring, sultry day into the darkest night.
Then suddenly a flash—a crash—the sky seemed rent in
twain!

While with a fearful howl and growl and rush, the wind
and rain

Beat down upon the ship. Again the blinding lightning
flashed!

The thunder crashed! The mighty waves dashed high
and roared and clashed!

The water poured from sky and sea! The solid timbers
creaked

And trembled as with cold and fright! The tempest howled
and shrieked!

THE CONFUSION OF THE VIKINGS.

As the storm blew hither—thither—
Drove the ship—they knew not whither,
All on board ran to and fro.

Ran to starboard, then to larboard,
Some ran aft and others forward—

No one knowing where to go.
As the dazzling, frightening lightning
Flashed about them, briefly brightening

Up the coal-black sea and sky,
And the wonderful deep thunder
Semed to roar above and under,

Each believed that all must die.
Then in fear some would not—could not
Do aught else but what they should not—

Getting in each other's way.
Some were swearing or despairing;
Some indifferent, as not caring

If they lived throughout the day.
Some were gaily laughing, chaffing,
Or huge draughts of strong ale quaffing,
Others crazy with alarm.
Some were weeping, others creeping;
Some with patient valor keeping
Calm, as though they feared no harm.

FLOKI'S PRAYERS AND DEFIANCE.

Floki, the viking bold,
As the waves pitched and rolled,
And in the dragon's hold
Poured o'er the bulwarks,
Stood on the *lypting*,* where
He, in the lightning's glare,
Saw the confusion there
Was on the vessel.
Then with faith prayed to Thor,
Odin, Frey and Vidar,
And to Tyr, god of war,
And other *Asar*:**
"Odin, thou god o'er all!
Who reignest in *Valhal*!***
Let not thy anger fall
On us poor mortals!
Stretch forth thy pitying arm!
Keep us from death or harm!
Quiet this great alarm!
Save this brave vessel!

* A raised enclosure on deck.
*** The heaven of the brave.

** The good gods.

Oh Thor, thou mighty one!
 God o'er earth, moon and sun!
 Feared even in *Jotun*—****

Let us not perish!
 Baldr, the Good and Pure,
 Unto us hope assure!
 Let not these waves immure
 Us in their darkness!"

Thus he devoutly prayed
 To the gods for their aid.
 Great were the vows he made
 Should he be rescued.
 But these did not appear
 His fervent prayers to hear,
 For not a god drew near
 His ship to save it.

This seeming unconcern
 Made Floki's anger burn,
 And in words loud and stern
 He then defied them:
 "Then with your help away!
 Back to your childish play!
 Safely in *Asgard* stay,
 Through fear of *Jotnar*!
 What cares a viking bold
 For aid from gods so old;
 Weakened by years untold,
 And such great cowards?
 Odin, thou puny thing!
 Called falsely lord and king
 O'er gods—earth—everything!—
 Odin, I scorn thee!

**** *Jotun*, or *Jotunheim*, home of the *Jotnar*, the foes of the *Asar*.

Thou, too, called 'Thor, the strong,'
Who boastest loud and long
Of great deeds—told in song—
 Thou hast accomplished!
How, with thy hammer worn,
Though held with gauntlets torn,
Can the earth be uptorn,
 When thy arm wields it?
E'en though thou couldst control
This earth and make it roll,
Still with a dauntless soul,
 Thor, I defy thee!"
Thus did he dare their ire
With his bold words of fire,
E'en though destruction dire
 Might then befall him.
Fearless and brave and free—
Whate'er his fate might be—
Like a true Norseman, he
 Brooked no indifference.

THE STORM ABATES—NIGHT.

Soon after Floki ceased speaking, rain and wind
Abated quickly, till only a light breeze
Blew softly in the sails, which again were spread.
The billows also waned—and the gentle waves
Now played around the ship. Night had now come on,
And moon and stars shone out—shedding their soft light
Upon the heaving breast of the living sea,
Which breathed more calmly now—touched by no fierce
 mood—
And on her bosom broad gently bore the ship.

Thus Floki's daring words pleased the gods, it seemed,
Far more than all his prayers.

FLOKI SENDS FORTH THE RAVENS.

Morning soon came on.
Several hours after sunrise, Floki
Woke from a refreshing, dreamless slumber.
Rising quickly from his bed, he hastened
On the deck, and there he cast his glances
O'er the endless ocean all about him.
Looked in vain for signs of land around him;
Looked in vain for trees or hills or mountains;
Looked in vain for sea-birds in the heavens—
All around was only gleaming water!
Not a sign to tell how far from Norway
Or what course his dragon had been driven!
But the heart of Floki never failed him.
Once again—forgetting the defiance
He had hurled at them—he prayed to Odin,
Thor, and all the gods who dwelt in *Asgard*,
Vowing that he would be ever faithful
In his trust in them, if he were only,
With his dragon, safely brought to *Snjoland*.*
Scarcely had this solemn vow been uttered,
When a way to save his men and vessel
Fell upon his soul as in a whisper
From the lips of Odin (it was Odinsdag).
“Bring the ravens from the foreroom!” ordered
He, and quickly to him they were carried.
From its prison then he soon released one—
Black as night—and threw it high above him.
For a moment in the air it hovered,

* Iceland.

Undecided, then it spread its pinions
To their utmost, gave a croak of farewell,
Turned, and swiftly flew away southeastward—
As they knew by heavenly signs—where Norway,
And not Snjoland, (which must lie northwestward),
Lay. For six whole days they sailed northwestward.
Then they freed another captive raven,
Which (unlike the other) hovered—frightened—
Many moments in the air above them,
When, with one despairing croak it settled
Back on deck, as if the vast expanse of water
Was too great for even its tireless wings to traverse.
Many days they sailed, when a third raven
Was set free by Floki. But this raven
Acted unlike either of the others,
And, when it was loosened, flew northwestward.
Gladly—fast as wind and oars could take them—
Did they follow in its wake, till mountains,
Capped with snow, arose, dark-blue, before them—
Here they fancied lay the island, Snjoland,
And, with all sails set, they rowed towards it.

THEY LAND.

Never for a moment doubting that it was island Naddod had
discovered ;
Ever hopeful that the gods would not desert them at this
serious moment ;
Vowing, if it should prove so, to build each god a splendid
temple ;
Bowing low at every stroke that sent the dragon forward,
Nearer to the land, which, rising now before them,

Dearer seemed than gold or other riches;
How the vikings worked the long-oars!
Now the land is near them!
And they now have
Landed!

THE ISLAND.

Joyfully the vikings landed and gave thanks to all their
 gods
For the voyage made in safety, though opposed by such
 great odds.
Then they looked about the island (such they found it was
 indeed);
Noted the high hills and mountains, which with Naddod's
 tales agreed.
But, though snow and ice now glistened on their summits,
 there were vales
Smiling with the cheery verdure mostly found in warmer
 dales.
How could Naddod find it dreary, or complain of ice and
 cold?
Surely he must have been jesting, when those chilly tales
 he told!
Otherwise a good description had he given of the land,
Which was just as he had pictured, save the weather now at
 hand.
As they wandered o'er the island, suddenly a man appeared
Just before them, as if springing from the earth. He had
 no beard,
And his head was closely shaven on the crown—all save a
 thin
Wreath of hair, which, like a fiery circle, hemmed the white
 crest in.

And a gown, instead of breeches, clothed his somewhat
portly form.
Long and close, at this strange creature, gazed the vikings.
His alarm
At the sight of men in armor (who, to him, seemed quite
as queer
As he did to them) was serious, first, but very soon his
fear
Left him, for their words and actions showed them friendly
toward him,
Though they looked, in all their trappings, very murderous,
fierce and grim.

THE IRISH MONKS.

Then in a tongue, such as they speak in northern Ireland,
He spoke to them, and many understood his words.
And soon they learned that he had come from Ireland, where
He had become a priest of that new, strange religion
That owns but one God, and whose high-priest dwells in
Rome.
With many others, mostly priests like him, he settled
In this cold land, where soon they built a town and temple.
This settlement had flourished many years, when Death
Blew his foul breath upon them, and the noxious plague
Slew all except himself and two companions—priests
Like him. They three now dwelt near by (just o'er the
hill).
He led them on until they reached the village, where
They met the other priests, who freely bade them welcome.
And here they tarried several days, observing closely
The worship of these Christians, till a quarrel arose
About the two religions and the greater power ,

Each side claimed for their god—or gods; the priests declaring

That their *one* God was far more powerful than *all*
The *Asar* of the Northmen, while the vikings claimed
That any *one* god in their creed possessed more power
Than He the Christians worshipped. Finally a truce
Was called, in which it was decided that the gods
Themselves should prove their strength by some such token
that

All doubt would soon be cleared away. Then Floki spoke,
Addressing Thor, the Mighty One, in earnest prayer :

FLOKI'S APPEAL TO THOR.

Oh Thor, called strongest of all gods!
Who dwellest in *Bilskirnir* hall,
The greatest house that e'er was built,
Which in *Thrudvanger* lies! O Thor!
I pray thee now girt on thy belt
Of strength, which gives thee twice the power
Thou hast before possessed! put on
Thy iron gloves, to give thee strength
To wield thy hammer, *Mjollnir*, which,
I pray thee, raise aloft until
It reach the sun! Then smite with all
Thy might upon this island! split
In twain the mountains to their roots,
And let these unbelievers note
How far superior is thy strength
To that of their weak, puny God,
Who dares not show himself when thou

Appearest! Strike, O Thor, I beg!
And I will consecrate this land
To thee, in thankfulness, forever!

THE RESULT.

Scarce had he ceased	Rocking the earth
His fervent prayer,	First up and down,
When from the clouds	Then to and fro!
A mighty blow	Sinking deep chasms
Fell like a flash	Where there were plains!
Upon the <i>holm</i> ,	Heaving up soil
Splitting in twain	With a dread crash!
Mountains and hills!	Such was the force
Rending the vales!	Of the blow Thor
Throwing huge rocks	Struck on that land!
High in the air!	

HOW THEY WERE AFFECTED THEREBY.

Throughout this fearful rending of the earth, the priests
Of Christ remained unmoved, as if they were accustomed
To daily scenes like these, till they had lost their dread
Of them, while many of the vikings—even of
The bravest—could not hide the fear that siezed them,
though
'Twas caused by one of their own gods, and at their own
Desire. Then one—the leader—of the Christians called,
Upon his knees, in earnest words, unto *his* God:

THE PRIEST'S PRAYER.

Oh Lord, Jehovah, Thou all-wise,
All-powerful maker of the heaven,
The earth, the sun, the moon, and all

The stars! Thou, who didst love mankind
 So much that Thou didst freely give
 Thine only son to death, that all
 Might from the tortures of hell-fire
 Be saved! O Lord, we pray that Thou,
 Who hast done this, and more, for man,
 Wouldst help us now, in this our need!
 Oh give, we pray Thee, just one sign
 Of Thy omnipotence, so that
 These poor benighted heathens may
 Learn that Thou art the only God.
 Hear us, we pray Thee, Lord!! *Amen.*

THE RESULT.

Just as the last	Hissed, shook and roared!
Word left his mouth,	Most direful sounds
Fire and smoke,	Smote on the ear!
Water and mud,	Foul, deadly steam
Came down from heaven	Issued from springs,
And filled the chasms	Where erst had been
Rent in the vales,	Only a plain!
Mountains and hills!	Loud thunder pealed,
From out the earth	Rending the skies!
Sprang sparks of fire,	Deafening the ear!
Lava, hot stones,	Or, with deep booms,
Ashes, mud, steam,	Rumbled and rolled!
Water that boiled	Bright lightning flashed,
With intense heat!	Crackled and hissed
And, above all,	Fearfully, as
Rose the black smoke!	It struck the rocks,
How the earth crashed,	Shattering them in

Fragments, which flew	Water that boiled,
Some ells away!	Out of the earth!
Then the storm died,	And so they come
Suddenly, as	Unto this day;
It had been born;	And they will come
But there still came	Many years hence!
Fire and smoke,	So wondrous are
Lava, hot stones,	God and his works!
Ashes, mud, steam,	

THE DEATH OF THE MONKS.

So awful were the scenes they witnessed, many
Shrank back affrighted; others cowered, trembling
With dread, upon the ground; still others fainted,
And lay like dead for many moments after
The storm had died away; e'en Floki faltered
In speech and motion, several minutes ere he
Could get enough control o'er tongue and body
To speak distinctly or to raise his trembling,
Limp form erect. The Christians, like the Norsmen,
Were greatly frightened. Ere all could recover
Some hours had passed. Then each looked at the others
To notice how they were affected. Floki
Was very thoughtful for a time, deciding
Within his mind the author of the wonders
Performed before their eyes. He then concluded
That Thor had done all this to give still stronger
Proof that the old faith of the North was real.

And, fearing that his men might be deluded
Into the new belief by this occurrence,
He cried to them in passionate entreaty:
"See what strong Thor has in an hour accomplished!
Therefore give thanks for this proof of his power!
Let us, therefore, build him a splendid temple,
And offer to the gods our sacrifices,
That we have gained the victory o'er these Christians!"
"Nay," cried the priest, "*ours* is the glorious victory!
See how the jokuls belch forth fire and lava!
They will, henceforth, burn inwardly forever!
Deo sit laus! for this, His heavenly token
Of His great love and strength! What more impressive
Sign could he give than this? Brethren, *Orate!*"
At this the priests sank on their knees, which Floki
Saw with a dislike ever growing stronger,
Until at last he called in fiery passion
Unto his men: "Here, bind these priests and take them
To yonder pool, 'which their own God created!'
Then, if He have such power, He'll surely save them
From death by drowning. Hasten, then, and cast them
Into its sombre depths!" And soon they carried
The powerless friars quite to the water's margin
And laid them down; these earnestly imploring,
In vain for mercy. "Then," exclaimed their leader,
"As you do unto us, so may Jehovah
Do unto you! This land, which you have offered
To Thor and all your gods, shall yet be Christian,

And your descendants will disown the *Asar*;
Distress and misery shall ever follow
You and your men, and, as a curse, this island
Shall ever be thus blighted!" With fierce curses
The vikings hurled the priests into the water,
In which they struggled feebly; then with praises
And prayers to the great God whom they so worshipped,
Sank out of sight.

As the priest said, it happened.
Great storms of snow and wind sprank up, harassing
The vikings. Sickness, too, appeared, and many
Died on that island, now so cold and dreary.
With only half his men; his dragon injured;
Young Floki, after many months, reached Norway.
And ever after that the worst misfortunes
Befell his every raid.

And at *Thingvalla*,
Into the pool wherein he drowned the Christians,
The *Allthing* yearly hurls its shrieking victims.
And now the island—as the priest predicted—
Is being to the Christian faith converted.



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